

AN

APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE,

ON THE

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

OF

WAR WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

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APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE.

I KNOW it is a thankless office to warn my countrymen of impending evils. An honest developement of their causes and consequences is likely to be received with distrust or impatience ;—to be resisted or evaded by the feelings of present interest, by self-love, by vanity, by groundless hopes, and idle wishes. Anxiety and fear are troublesome companions—if they cannot be put to silence, they must be dismissed. As I cannot minister to the appetite for incredible rumours, I feel that I am an unwelcome messenger ; for I am as utterly ignorant of the progress of negotiation at Washington, as I am sure of its fruitless termination.

I am fully aware, that there is a reluctance in the human mind, to admit truths which interfere with present pursuits or interests, which perplex the calculations of prudence, and demand exertion to prevent or mitigate calamity. Men borrow confidence from their hopes, and resist conviction as they would an enemy. He then who disturbs their treacherous repose, their delusive dreams of safety, by shewing them the giant form of danger, is regarded as an intruder, if he is not assailed as a foe.

These considerations, so inauspicious to my hopes, shall not deter me from the honest discharge of what I deem to be a duty. And could I discern in the public mind, a willingness to fix its attention upon the causes which have brought the country to its present critical state, I should not altogether despair of its fortunes. A general conviction of the dangers which threaten its peace and liberties, would give energy enough to public opinion to prevent the shock of a British war. But unless more just opinions prevail among the soundest portion of the community, upon the causes and consequences of such a war; unless the public mind, generally, can be touched with fear, and kindled into activity, war, at no distant period, with its long train of evils, must come. I do not undertake to prophesy the exact time of this event; it is enough to know that the temper and policy of the administration will one day bring it to pass: And it is chiefly owing to a spirit of forbearance, growing out of the unexampled situation of Great Britain, that we are not now at war with her, and fast bound to the destinies of France. That spirit of hostility in the administration towards Great Britain, one great source of their power, as well as its aliment, which gains strength by an association with the honest prejudices of federalists; and above all, the appalling demands of France, which cannot be resisted without the sacrifice of the feelings, interests, and power of a party; must issue in a British war—an unhallowed war to us—without the sanction of justice or necessity; which can bring no glory or security with it; but which must involve the safety of the public liberties in its progress, and close with the loss of our name as an independent nation.

Deeply impressed with the justness of these sentiments, and indulging a faint hope that I may find "fit audience, though few," I propose to examine the present popular grounds of complaint against Great Britain. These I shall comprise under the following heads :—

1. The impressment of our seamen.
2. The orders in council.

These embrace the principal topics of complaint which are now urged by the administration, and seem to limit the angry declamations of its supporters. For since France has settled the question of the colonial trade, it is no longer claimed as a right ; since the traffic in imperial licences is publicly driven in our great cities, little is heard of the late British transit duty ; and since the brilliant achievement of the frigate President, the affair of the Chesapeake has ceased to interest the public feeling.

It is often repeated, that the impressment of our seamen is justifiable cause of war. It is a theme full of irritation, and leading to every kind of misrepresentation. The passions of men are so easily excited on this subject, that there is little chance for candour or argument to gain a hearing. Indeed there is little ground for reasoning on either side, for the question of right is unusually clear of doubt. The difficulties are of a practical, rather than of an abstract sort, arising partly from intrinsic, and partly from artificial causes. Mutual good temper, liberal and enlightened views only are necessary to dry up this ever-flowing fountain of bitter waters.

In all treaties between nations, as there are conflicting rights and interests, there must necessarily be mutual concessions. A preponderance of advantage must

decide the utility of such compacts. If this can be gained, the exercise of doubtful or disputed rights may be suspended for future discussion and arrangement ; informal agreements may be substituted for permanent stipulations, and points of minor importance absolutely yielded. An enlarged view of national interests must exist in the government, or no treaty could ever be made ; for if a nation were to exact the full measure of its preconceived rights or interests, no other nation could treat with it on a footing of equality.

Great Britain claims a right to the services of its own subjects. We cannot deny the justice of this, for we claim and exercise as a sovereign state the same right ; so does France ; and so did every civilized nation of Europe. It has long been recognized as a principle of public law ; and the decisions of the proper tribunals, touching particular cases, have always been governed by it. It is as much the law in the United States, and the Supreme Court have so decided, as it is in England, that a man cannot divest himself of his allegiance. It is not then so much the abstract right, as it is the abuses connected with its exercise, which furnishes the ground of complaint. On this point, Great Britain has more than once discovered a willingness to provide against future abuses, by such concessions and informal stipulations, as would have given us all the security which the nature of the case admits. The British government proposed first to Mr. King, and afterwards to his successors, to limit the exercise of this right to the narrow seas, over which the right of dominion has been claimed for centuries. And can it be expected that Great Britain, under any circumstances, will ever formally abandon the mere right to reclaim her own subjects, while her navy continues to

be the guardian of her independence? When the king of Great Britain, with the consent of his people, does homage for his crown, and consents to hold his empire as a fief of the United States, this right may be yielded.

There are intrinsic difficulties in the case, for which neither peace nor war, treaty or no treaty, can provide a remedy. Identity of language, the resemblance of persons and manners, between the subjects of the two countries, will occasionally originate mistakes with the best intentions in those who commit them. Native Americans will sometimes be impressed, either through mistake or caprice. These impediments to a good understanding necessarily exist, but so long as they cannot justly be imputed to the government, they ought not to stand in the way of accommodation. During the administration of Washington they did not; for he made a treaty with Great Britain, containing no express provisions against the abuses complained of, although they then existed. He did not deem it expedient to reject a treaty because it did not provide for impossibilities.

The high wages which our late flourishing commerce enabled our merchants to give, allured British seamen to desert; and it is notorious that thousands of Scotch, Irish, and British sailors, with American protections in their pockets, have found profitable employment in our service. Yet the reclamation of one of these has been recorded as the impressment of a native American, and made the subject of much angry declamation. When it is added to this, that our commerce, for more than ten years, came in contact with the British naval power in every sea, it is extraordinary that so few *bona fide* Americans have been impressed. Of this number Great Britain has never refused

to restore one on application accompanied with the usual evidence. If the injustice so often charged upon the government had in fact existed, our vessels would have been stripped of their crews, and our commerce have languished for want of seamen.

But let the administration with its partizans exaggerate these evils ; let them be represented as so intolerable or disgraceful as to justify a war ; a reply is not wanting which, if honour or shame had not lost their power, would silence them forever. Mr. Munroe actually provided for the security of our seamen, as far as it is practicable, by an informal but honorary arrangement in the year 1806 ; but as this did not, in point of form, constitute a part of the treaty, it was, chiefly for this cause, indignantly rejected by Mr. Jefferson, without submitting it to the constitutional tribunal of the country. Yet the same administration instructed the same minister, by the very letter which gave him notice of the rejection of the treaty, to enter into informal stipulations on this subject, as well as all others confided to his management. This strange inconsistency, this captious trifling with the interests of the nation, this irritating and perverse temper, are all chargeable to the same administration which, from that day to this, have not failed to make the subject of impressment the bitter ingredient in all their attempts at amicable adjustment. Mr. Pinkney was especially instructed to connect it with the affair of the Chesapeake ; and as often as other grounds of complaint have been in danger of being removed, this has been inserted into the discussion to make defeat certain. It is a subject so impenetrable, by reason or argument ; it is so much connected with our impulses and passions ; it gives a hostile administration so strong a hold upon the public

feeling ; that for them to adjust it, on any terms, would be like stripping the combatant of his armour before the battle was finished. No ; so long as the reclamation of an English deserter, or the taking of an Irishman with or without a protection, can arouse the passions of the multitude ; so long as the mistake, or wanton aggression of a single officer, in the impressment of an American citizen, can, without inquiry, or appeal to the proper authority, excite a spirit of resentment or revenge, against the British nation, so long will this subject be kept in reserve by the present administration.

2. The orders in council.

Great Britain justifies these orders on the ground of retaliation, and has pledged her word to repeal them, whenever the *fact* of the repeal of the French decrees shall occur. The administration at first contended that though a belligerent had a right to retaliate the injuries of its enemy ; yet neither could lawfully exercise this right to the injury of an unoffending neutral. The United States, as a neutral nation, had a right to prosecute a lawful commerce with either or both of the parties, so long as it preserved its neutral character ; and in order to satisfy Great Britain that this character had not been violated, by submitting to the Berlin decree, Mr. Madison, then secretary of state, urged that it was merely a municipal regulation, not intended to operate upon the citizens of this country, and as such afforded no justification of the orders. The principle was admitted, though the case it was contended had not occurred which would justify its application. But in this instance the administration were egregiously mistaken in their facts. They gratuitously assumed a falsehood, for the purpose of palliating the unexam-

pled injuries of France. The Berlin decree did operate upon us, in the seizure of innocent property belonging to the citizens of the United States, in the then neutral states of Hamburgh, Bremen, Leghorn, and the papal territory. It was executed wherever the power or influence of France was felt. It was also executed on the high seas ; for Mr. Madison himself, in a letter to General Armstrong of the 22d May, 1807, six months before the issuing of the British orders, declared that the " French cruisers were enforcing the Berlin decree, in a manner that would constitute just claims for redress : " And in the September following, the emperor himself declared, " that the decree had no exception in its terms, and ought to have none in its application." All this, and much more, was known and done before the orders in council issued. Without spending an indignant word upon the justification of such municipal regulations, as violated the most important stipulations of the treaty of 1800, and became another name for sequestration, while they virtually made us, by our acquiescence, accessory to the decree itself, I would merely remark, that the ground assumed by the administration altogether failing them, the question took an entire new form. As the administration, instead of vindicating the neutral rights of the country, became the passive instrument of injury, an unresisting medium through which France could reach her enemy, Great Britain claimed the right of returning the blow. One year before this was done, however, she gave a formal notice, appended to the treaty, that she reserved this right of retaliation, to be put in force only in the event of our submission to the Berlin decree. We did submit, and retaliation followed.

If the rights of war do not give to a belligerent, under such circumstances, the right of retaliation, it may be deprived of its most important means of annoyance or defence, by this partial interference of the neutral. It would be better for the belligerent at once to make an enemy of such neutral, than to suffer itself to be handcuffed under the pretence of neutrality. And if a belligerent should be compelled, by a regard to the rights and interests of the war, to resort to such a measure against the pretended neutral, it would be strictly a war of defence : For, before this could happen, the neutral must have made it for the interest of the belligerent to give the shape of war to a contest in which all the gain had been on one side, and all the loss on the other. But such a crisis could never occur, unless the neutral had first forfeited, by its indirect hostility, the immunities of neutrality.

I have chosen thus far briefly to consider the question *stricti juris*, without resorting to the argument, which is by itself conclusive, arising from the character of the enemy, and the peculiar conduct of the war ; the necessities which these impose, and the measures which they justify.

It was about this time, that the administration took what was then called its dignified stand. Disdaining to count the number of their enemies, or to make any discriminations of character, the government melted them all down into one mass, and proposed to maintain what was then denominated the neutral position of the country, by a species of armed neutrality. All this ended in some abstract resolutions, and a non-intercourse law against Great Britain and France, in place of the embargo, which a suffering people would no longer endure. This measure did not succeed in con-

vincing the nation that the policy of the administration was either dignified or impartial, and was soon followed by the deceitful arrangement with Mr. Erskine.

Great Britain refused to ratify this adjustment, chiefly in consequence of the insult to the British government inserted in the correspondence by Mr. Madison himself. This important fact has recently been disclosed ; and would of itself have ensured the rejection of the treaty, independently of its having been concluded by Mr. Erskine, not only without authority, but in violation of his instructions.

By this time it was discovered that Great Britain had been the first aggressor upon our rights ; and the evidence of this was found in the rule of the war of 1756. This was declared by Mr. Adams, then a senator of the United States, to be the "root" of all the infringements of our neutral rights. In the progress of this discussion,* however, it was made to appear, that, even admitting the rule of the war of 1756 to be indefensible upon the strict principles of public law, which I do not, France, as early as the year 1704 and 1744, by various ordinances, had adopted principles of greater extent and rigour, and more injurious to the rights of neutrals. It appeared also that Holland had adopted the same course of policy, and that all maritime states, whenever the interests of war should render it necessary, would adopt similar principles.

* I allude particularly to the examination of this question by the writer of the "Analysis of the correspondence between our administration and Great Britain and France;" a production of singular merit, elucidating with great force and precision a subject but imperfectly understood before. There have since a number of political pamphlets issued from the press, which I am satisfied, from internal evidence, are from the same pen. There is great power in them all, and what must be gratifying to a disinterested mind, they have had a most extensive and decisive influence upon public opinion.

This topic too has been abandoned, and the original aggression has been found in the famous British order of May, 1806. As this had become the last resort of the administration and its supporters, I had proposed to enter into a minute examination of its origin and effects ;* and I am deterred only by an intimation in the cabinet paper, that this order is no longer an obstacle to accommodation ; though I have no doubt other obstacles will be found, to prevent it. I cannot quit this topic, however, though it is now dead, without a remark upon the use which the administration have made of it.

This order was intended, and did in fact, remove the ground of complaint urged by the administration against the rule adopted by Great Britain in relation to the colonial trade. It was in substance a relaxation of the rule in our favour, permitting all but the direct trade with the enemies colonies ; an indirect mode resorted to by Mr. Fox, to avoid a formal abandonment of the principle, and yet to give to the United States all the advantages of such a concession. Mr. Munroe declares in his correspondence that he understood it in this light, and that Mr. Fox admitted, that such would be its operation, though he was unwilling to admit that this was its particular object. The administration were satisfied with this mode of quieting their claims, and our citizens for some time enjoyed its benefits. Mr. Madison continued to entertain the same opinion of this order so late as the spring of 1809, when he made his treacherous arrangement with Mr.

* This has been done in a very able and perspicuous manner in a pamphlet, entitled, " An Inquiry into the origin, nature, and object of the British Order in Council of May 16th, 1806 ; by Enos Bronson, Esq. of Philadelphia," the well known editor of the Gazette of the United States.

Erskine. He then required the repeal of the British orders of 1807, as the only orders violating our neutral rights. His authority, derived from the law of Congress, required this ; with this he was satisfied, and in his proclamation declared that all the orders in council, violating the rights of neutral commerce, were abrogated. Mark well ! In one year after, this same order of 1806, which had satisfied all our complaints on the subject of the colonial trade, which had been past over in silence in the negotiation with Mr. Erskine, was suddenly brought to life ; and from that time forward made a conspicuous figure in all the discussions of our foreign relations. It was represented as an infringement of national law, of so malignant a nature as almost to justify a crusade against Great Britain, by the civilized portion of the world. It was declared to be an unexampled violation of neutral rights, the first in the series of aggressions, the origin of the Berlin and Milan decrees, and the only obstacle in the way of their repeal. It was a cruel invention in the business of war, calculated to extend its calamities to such as were not parties to the contest. It frustrated the ardent desire of his imperial majesty to do us justice, by the solemn injunction, which his honour imposed, not to repeal his decrees, which were retaliatory, so long as the cause of them existed. There was a wonderful concert in the language of the American and French cabinets on the subject of this order. After lying in "oblivious night" for years, it was suddenly recalled to a new service, and the communications of both cabinets coterminously became vocal with it. Application was forthwith made to the British government ; and when it was ascertained that this order was considered as merged in a subsequent one, and would not

be formally repealed, it then became the theme of fresh declamation, the only impediment to the freedom of the seas !

But these topics which I have briefly examined are nothing more than the pretences for hostility. If the pith of our controversy with Great Britain lay only in these causes, all irritation would soon subside, and a just policy would bring again the days of prosperity. And this I am persuaded would be accomplished in spite of an administration, whose power is compounded of French attachment and British hatred, if it was not at the same time supported by the quick jealousies, sudden resentments, unreasonable expectations, and deeply rooted prejudices of the great body of honest Americans, in relation to the people and government of Great Britain. The spirit of lofty pretension, of rigid exaction, and of rival animosity, which imperceptibly influences the opinions even of such men, has been enlisted into the service of the party now in power, under the various pretexts which the purposely unsettled state of our relations with Great Britain, has supplied. Had it not been for the operation of such causes, the present administration could never have jeopardized the safety of the country by their slavish attachment to one nation, and their hatred of another. Public opinion would have compelled them to make an honourable adjustment with Great Britain, which might have been effected at any time ; or it would have driven them from power, and filled their places with men of other views and better principles. A sounder policy would have prevailed, which would have been felt in again opening the true sources of prosperity. Our national character would not have

become the scorn of slaves, nor our citizens the victims of perfidious rapacity.

I do not here address the apologists and abettors of French despotism, the revilers of Great Britain, the advocates of war, the traitors to the independence of the country. With such men I will neither reason nor expostulate. But with men who have an interest in the last great question of peace or war ; who are willing to examine temperately our own unquestionable as well as doubtful rights ; who can contemplate, with some just feeling, the present war against the liberties and virtues of mankind ; who can keep down their resentments, while they consider the pretensions of Great Britain, her motives, her interests, and her dangers ; and who can discern in the policy of Bonaparte, the steady pursuit of universal conquest, by the diabolical union of fraud and force, of all that is detestable with all that is terrible....I would both reason and expostulate.

Of such men I would inquire what, but the operation of causes already indicated, has enabled Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison to persevere for years in a deceptive, irritating, and hostile course of policy towards Great Britain ? To avoid the proffered renewal of a treaty which the best interest of the country demanded ;—to reject the one afterwards concluded, by our ministers in London, embracing all the points in dispute between the two nations ;—to refuse to deliver up British deserters, when demanded, claiming them as native Americans ;—to defeat the solemn mission of Mr. Rose, sent to this country for the sole purpose of making honorable reparation for the unauthorized attack on the Chesapeake, by a scrupulous adherence to a mere punctilio, against reason and usage ;—to ca-

jole Mr. Erskine into a delusive treaty, knowingly made without authority, and carrying with it an insult inserted by Mr. Madison himself, to ensure its rejection ; to charge Mr. Jackson, another minister of peace and reconciliation, falsely, with offering an insult to the government, and by virtue of that falsehood, to dismiss him in an unprecedented manner ;—to lay an embargo, by sea and land, under false pretences, intended to cripple her commerce, and to prostrate her independence at the foot of her implacable enemy ;—and, to hasten to the last most atrocious act of the administration, to renew the non-intercourse law against her, without previous authority, assuming, for its basis, an experienced falsehood, and then requiring of Great Britain to believe it, and forthwith to repeal her orders, or prepare to meet the consequences of our just resentment !!

The same causes which have enabled the administration to prevent a peace with Great Britain, have also aided them in preventing a war with France. The current of our resentments has been diverted from its true course, and turned against the nation, from whose character we expect to receive the full measure of our rights, and whose immense naval power keeps all our jealousies alive, because its abuse would be followed by much greater evils than we apprehend from France. On the other hand, as the sentiment is generally felt, that neither honour, justice, nor good faith, belongs to the character of the emperor, a devoted administration, by suppressing or eviscerating such parts of the despatches from France as were calculated to rouse the feelings of the country, by a patient endurance of perfidy, insult, and robbery, by humble supplication and gentle murmurs, by systematic hypocrisy in alliance

with all the arts of popular delusion, have been able to carry a nation, founded under the auspices of Washington, to the foot of the imperial throne.

I need not search far into the records of our humiliation, to find the evidence of these crinations. Without quoting a sentence from the dejected, spiritless,* or adulatory communications of our ministers at the imperial court, I will merely select a few sentiments from the direct correspondence of the administration.

In the spring of 1807 they declared, that the indiscriminate seizure of our vessels in the West Indies,

* The style of reception at the imperial court, as well as the spirit of the different foreign ministers, not excepting Chancellor Livingston, Gen. Armstrong, or even Mr. Barlow, are much the same as they were in 1796. Substituting Napoleon for Carnot, the following passages from BURKE's "Letter on a Regicide Peace," have nearly as much truth in their application now, as they had then.

"To those who do not love to contemplate the fall of human greatness, I do not know a more mortifying spectacle, than to see the assembled majesty of the crowned heads of Europe waiting as patient suitors in the antichamber of regicide. At the opening of these doors, what a sight it must be to behold the plenipotentiaries of royal impotence in the precedence which they will intrigue to obtain, and which will be granted to them according to the seniority of their degradation, sneaking into the regicide presence, and with the relics of the smile, which they had dressed up for the levee of their masters, still flickering on their curled lips, presenting the faded remains of their courtly graces, to meet the scornful, ferocious, sarcastic grin of a bloody ruffian, who, while he is receiving their homage, is measuring them with his eye, &c.—These ambassadors may return as good courtiers as they went; but can they ever return from that degrading residence loyal and faithful subjects; or with any true affection to their master, or true attachment to the constitution, religion, or laws of their country? At best, they will become totally indifferent to good and evil, to one institution or another. This species of indifference is but too generally distinguishable in those who have been much employed in foreign courts; but in the present case the evil must be aggravated without measure; for they go from their country, not with the pride of the old character, but in a state of the lowest degradation; and what must happen in their place of residence, can have no effect in raising them to the level of true dignity, or of chaste self-estimation, either as men, or as representatives," &c. &c.

under the Berlin decree, which violated the treaty with France, and which was issued in contempt of all notions of national law, had a tendency to do what?—*“to thicken the cloud that hung over the amity of the two nations.”* The burning of our ships on the high seas, without even the formality of a decree, was gently complained of as *“the most distressing of all modes by which belligerents exercised force contrary to right.”* The declaration of war against Great Britain, made by the emperor in our behalf, had merely *“the air of an assumed authority ;”* and the treacherous surprise of millions, under the Rambouillet decree, was nothing more than a *“misapplication of the law of reprisals, combined with a misconstruction of our own law.”* The tenants of the state prison would strike a man to the ground with their chains, who should attempt to justify so perfidious a robbery under so shameless a pretence. Mr. Madison knows as well as any man living, that the Rambouillet decree has no concern with the law of reprisals, or the misconstruction of his non-intercourse law ; nor has he the least expectation that this property will ever be restored, though he has the hardihood to declare it. Well might the Duc de Cadore declare to the world, that we were a nation without “any just political views, without energy, or honour.” It was an honest sentiment in the Duc, and much to be commended for its frankness. And we must admit him to be a competent judge, for the evidence of the charge is all in his own custody. He was ordered by his master to make the experiments ; and after having faithfully applied all the instruments of torture to the administration, *the sensorium of the nation*, he formally pronounced it to be a mere *caput mortuum*, without sensibility or life.

It is worth the remark, that in many communications of the administration, there is in fact an apology for the injury, as in the case of the Rambouillet decree, where it is gravely said to the people of this country, that the whole evil originated in mistake : in others, it seems to be the mode or style of injustice which forms the burthen of complaint ; as in the still continued practice of burning merchantmen, which has been denominated the most distressing of *all modes* of committing injustice ; and in none is there the least approach towards that manly spirited tone, which either justice, or the honour of the country demanded.

In this last interval of repose, it may be useful to ask what there is in the present condition of Great Britain to justify the opinion that she is desirous of provoking a war with the United States. We behold her engaged with an enemy, who solemnly declares to the world that nothing short of her destruction shall end the conflict ; an enemy nurtured in blood, and fed by conquest ; whose genius is altogether military, and who has already bowed the greater part of continental Europe to his fell purpose. The nature of the present war is such, that peace would be to Great Britain another name for submission. There is literally no discharge in this war ; no hope, but in her ability to sustain it. It is a struggle for existence, requiring all her strength, resources, and fortitude. It is this conviction in the minds of the people of England, that enables the government to carry on the war ; and it is this, which throws into it such a spirit of fortitude and constancy, such deeds of courage, such perilous but brilliant achievements, as smite the heart of the tyrant with dismay.

For the last five years, nothing has been said of the invasion of England. The policy of Bonaparte has been to accomplish her destruction by the ruin of her commerce. He considers her commerce as her life blood ; and seems to believe that if the channels of this can be stopped, death must ensue. How much truth there is in this opinion, it is not important to inquire ; it is enough to know that all his prodigious efforts are governed by it. The continental system is nothing but this theory reduced to practice. He seems to have conquered countries for no other purpose than to make them auxiliary to this scheme of destroying British commerce. The adoption of it is required as the pledge of honest neutrality ; it is exacted as the badge of submission ; and if any nation refuses to wear it, it is deemed a good cause of war, which is never forgotten, though policy may dictate delay.

Thus situated, can it be believed that Great Britain is disposed to provoke a war with the United States. Unquestionably she is impelled by powerful motives to maintain the relations of peace so long as it can be done without a stain upon her honour, or a blow at her vital interests. She cannot wish to add to the number of her enemies, while she is grappling with one that requires her whole strength. She indulges no dreams of conquest ; she has neither blood nor treasure to waste in an unnecessary war with this country ; but she has *that* to protect, which is more important to her than either.

If we turn to the representations of the war advocates, we shall find it often repeated, that Great Britain exists by our forbearance. We hold her destinies in our hand. With shattered finances, increasing burthens, disastrous expeditions, murmuring manufactu-

ners, and a declining commerce, it is within the compass of our energies to humble her pride, and eclipse her glory for ever. And yet this same nation, thus pressed on every side, thus dependent on our good will, is trampling upon our rights, and wantonly provoking a war, which must end in her ruin ! When nature and experience contradict themselves, such representations may gain credit.

It is unquestionably true that the administration have made many bold experiments upon the spirit of Great Britain, in the belief that she was not in a situation to notice them. Every period in the course of her affairs, of real or imaginary depression, has been the signal for rallying all our complaints, and urging them in the tone of demand. Whenever she has made advances towards reconciliation, the administration have receded in sullen affectation of dignity. If she appeared anxious to settle subsisting differences by negotiation, it was proof of her weakness, and made the occasion of some new demands : if she omitted to do this, it became the evidence of her unfriendly disposition, and called for some token of resentment. The last experiment, however, has probably been made, unless satisfactory explanations are given. A gallant nation, like Great Britain, cannot be made desperate without danger. Honour is the unbought jewel of her crown. Unless this far-beaming ornament, the polar star of every true Englishman, can be preserved unsullied, the war will end in her humiliation. Till this happens, unprovoked hostility will be resisted ; insult will not be endured. So long as England stands forth the champion of freedom and civilization, she must maintain all the honours of her station. Her interest, her policy, the success of the cause in which she is

engaged, demand of her every concession or sacrifice, which is consistent with her truest rights and honour. But to yield more than this to any nation, would be evidence of her inability to sustain the conflict ; and for us to require it would be the evidence of unappeasable hostility. In whatever shape then, or under whatever popular pretences war shall come, unless the principles of human conduct change, it must come, because it has been sought.

What is there, let me inquire, in the general character or conduct of Great Britain, that endangers our safety. On this subject, I am content to hear all that resentment or prejudice can allege ; and then to prove, by an examination in detail, that no other nation possesses as much justice, honour, or virtue, provided her character is not to be decided by the decree of a vice-admiralty judge, by the aggression of a naval commander, or by the morality of a peer of the realm.

In the history of what other nation can there be found such various and well directed industry, such punctuality in the fulfilment of engagements, such liberality in the common business of life, so pure and perfect an administration of justice, so much respect for public law, or so much good faith in the government ? These virtues, the causes and effects of her commercial prosperity, have inspired a confidence which is felt by the whole trading world. The nation is sound at heart ; and though many affect to deny this in words, they give the best evidence of its truth by their conduct. Great Britain is the only nation that is expected to do justice, or to preserve good faith ; and it is this very expectation that excites irritation whenever we imagine it is not fully answered. Her power on the ocean is and has been for years uncontrolled ;

and had it not been directed by a due regard to neutral rights, our commerce, second only to her own, would have been annihilated.

Prejudice may rail, but there is much to admire and approve in the character and institutions of Great Britain. Her liberty is not the worse for being old, nor less likely to endure. Instead of resting principally on metaphysical construction, or abstract theory, it has become in a great measure a matter of fact, which every Englishman can comprehend. He need not labour to understand a speech in parliament before he can decide whether his essential rights are violated or not; for he knows what his inheritance is, without such aids, and the best means of preserving it.*

The naval power of Great Britain has always been subservient to her commerce, which never could have reached its present height, if this power had been greatly abused. Her reputation in the commercial world has been one source of her greatness; and this could not have been preserved unless she had been substantially just. She has never possessed the means or the spirit of conquest; and she can never, while she remains a commercial, become a conquering nation.

* "In the famous law of the 3d Charles I. called the Petition of Right, the parliament says to the king, "Your subjects have *inherited* this freedom," claiming their franchises not on abstract principles, "as the rights of men," but as the rights of Englishmen, and as a patrimony derived from their forefathers. Selden and the other profoundly learned men, who drew this petition of right, were as well acquainted at least with all the general theories concerning "the rights of men," as any of the discourses in our pulpits or on your tribune; full as well as Dr. Price, or as the Abbe Seyes. But for reasons worthy of that practical wisdom which superseded their theoretic science, they preferred this positive, recorded *hereditary* title, to all which can be dear to the man and the citizen, to that vague speculative right, which exposed their sure inheritance to be scrambled for and torn to pieces by every wild litigious spirit."—*Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

There is a deep sense of religious truths, which pervades the great body of the English people. The fruits of this are seen in the almost incredible number of charitable institutions at home, and in that benevolent spirit which visits every region of the earth with the light of knowledge and the consolations of hope. The arts and sciences pay contribution to the comforts of life, while they sustain the order of society. The moral world is benefitted by those intellectual exertions, which are fostered and rewarded by the government.

A more sublime or affecting spectacle has never been seen, than the present war in Portugal and Spain. It combines valour with disinterestedness ; it is full of honour and glory, giving hope to the broken spirited nations of the continent. It has already done much to dissipate their fears, by shewing them the conquering legions of France, led by their boasting generals, disgraced and beaten by inferior numbers. I trust in an over-ruling Providence, that the banners under which the allied armies fight, are consecrated by the cause they maintain.

Quitting a theme, inspiring hope in the breasts of all the friends of human happiness, I turn to the contemplation of one replete with shame and terror—our present and probable future relations with France ;—of shame, from the nature and magnitude of the wrongs, which we have tamely endured ; and of terror, from the consequences which must follow a British war. No nation ever yet long preserved its liberties, that had lost its honour. When the seal of infamy is once put on a nation's character, the people are either conquered or betrayed. If the people of this country are so subdued in spirit that they are prepared to wear the badge of the administration, the work of subjugation is already

done, and all that is to follow is mere matter of form. They may prepare an inventory of their goods and chattels, and proffer their personal services to the tyrant, without waiting for the operation of the conscription, or the routine of contributions. Those who have thus sunk to the condition of slaves, will not be likely to quarrel about the etiquette of their servitude. But if the people have been deceived or betrayed by their own rulers ; if they are willing to look at their dangers, and exert themselves before exertions shall be vain ; they may yet wrench the country from the hands of its spoilers, wipe away its present foul disgrace, and retrieve its desperate fortunes. A war with Great Britain must therefore be resisted at all hazards. The causes of such a war have already been considered ; the most important of its consequences will be an alliance with France.

The immediate effects of the war will be felt in the ruin of our commerce—the friend of civilization, the constant associate of liberty, the parent of many virtues ; and in the consequent decline of agriculture : they will be felt in the general consternation, which will succeed the loss of credit and confidence ; in burthens augmented an hundred fold by the destruction of the regular revenue, and the necessary expenditures of war ; in an increasing inability to support them, which will find no relief or resource in that spirit which a good cause inspires ; in the deterioration of the public morals, and the general impoverishment of the country. These evils, necessarily resulting from the commencement of war, will fall most heavily on the commercial states, and will be greatly augmented by the criminal neglect of the administration to provide for the defence of the country. Still they could be sustained,

even in an unnecessary war, if it did not involve an alliance with France.

An alliance with France ! These words fall like molten lead upon my heart ; they excite unmingled horror ; they extinguish the last glimmering of hope. An alliance with France carries with it the foulest disgrace, and ensures the basest servitude. The state of Holland, of Switzerland, of Prussia, of Sweden, and of all the Italian states, is the best commentary on French alliance. It is the wormwood and the gall, which the wrath of heaven has mingled for the nations that have polluted themselves with French abominations. Germany has at last sunk into the rank of an ally. Russia is permitted to pursue a half submission policy. The time is not far distant, when she will be compelled to take her place among the vassal states of Europe, or make one last effort to preserve her independence. Spain and Portugal have nobly preferred to grapple with their invaders, and to take their only chance of future safety, to the infamy and certain ruin of an alliance. This is the alternative which the tyrant offers ; a co-operation in his ambitious scheme of universal despotism, or war, even to utter extermination. Policy may sometimes suffer a delay, that intrigue and corruption may accomplish their work ; and what they fail to do, treachery and force will finish. England is the last great obstacle to his gigantic plan, and every nation that freights a vessel, or consumes a bale of cloth, must be bowed to his purpose. There is neither respite nor neutrality allowed in this work. *Delenda est Carthago*—is the spring of all his mighty movements ; its completion will be the consummation of all his hopes. A state once brought to aid him in this project, is subdued to all his present purposes. The pre-

sent is boastingly called the last Punic war, in a spirit more fell than ever dwelt in a Roman bosom. He is a studious imitator of Roman policy in the business of breaking down states that thwart his views, first to the rank of confederates, and afterwards incorporating them into the body of his empire ; in dividing and beating his enemies separately, and in all that is imposing, magnificent, or terrible.

What is there, then, my countrymen, in the character or conduct of the imperial tyrant, that should tempt us to become his ally in a war against Great Britain ? Is there any consolation in the late intelligence from France, that as we have taken measures to cause our rights to be respected, *he will assist us !* The mere expression of his good will is portentous ; it imports a dreadful unity of purpose, a fellowship of interest and design ; it is associated with such awful forebodings, and such dire recollections ; it savours so strongly of domestic treason against the falling liberties of the country ; that this single expression, truly felt, is enough to collect horrors like a frost around the heart of every honest American.

Do we expect that our commerce will thrive under his patronage, who has publicly declared that he hates commerce and all its concerns ; and that he wishes to see Europe reduced to the condition of the fourth century ? whose spirit and policy are wholly military, and who justly thinks that commerce is not only hostile to his system, but fatal to its endurance ? Can it be expected that he, who has already crippled the commerce of France ; who requires of all his allies and friends, as the price of his good will, the condition of his assistance, the interdiction of all commerce with Great Britain ; will relax his iron system in favour of a nation,

which he holds in merited contempt ? The administration have never risen to the dignity of any other notice than insults and blows. Under these they have grown docile. As no art or disguise has been found necessary, they have been dispensed with as useless ; and broad noonday robbery, public scourging, taunts, and threats, have been employed to reduce them to the continental system. Experience has satisfied the tyrant that his means were well chosen, and well adapted to the spirit of the administration. They have at length caused their rights to be respected, by the invasion of the Spanish territory ; by the renewal of the non-importation law against Great Britain ; the protection and aid given to French privateers ; and above all, by their brilliant achievement in the affair of the Little Belt ! The emperor is satisfied, and will assist us !

Or is it the tender regard which the emperor discovers for neutral rights on the land or sea, that would induce us to seek his aid in repelling British aggression ? This champion of the freedom of the seas has had the frankness to declare, in substance, that until England is humbled, he must disregard all rights which interfere with this pursuit ; and that we ought, as well wishers to the repose of the world, to be willing to submit to sacrifices, and to endure wrongs, for the advancement of that happy state, when his will shall be the rule of universal obedience.

It is overwhelming to reflect upon the progress already made by one man, towards the attainment of what was once considered chimerical—a universal monarchy ; and this too without affecting much concealment of his object, or hardly stooping to employ plausible pretences. He has hunted liberty as his natural game, declaring himself to be its protector ; he has

brought nations to aid in their own destruction, by joining in the war against England, in order that he may establish the liberty of the seas, when her ruin shall be accomplished ; he has violated the obligations of treaties, trampled on the rights of justice and humanity, to give salutary lessons to the refractory or rebellious ; he has provoked wars, and conquered countries, for the repose of the continent ; he has perpetrated thefts and robberies, in order to restore the lost sense of obligation ; he has committed old crimes with new aggravations, and enlarged the boundary of human depravity by the commission of new ones ; he has bowed the lofty spirit, the independent mind, and compelled it to lend its energies to corrupt the rising generation in France with the maxims of despotism, to exclude the light of freedom and the beam of hope, and to cloud the intellectual vision with gloom and despair.*

In France, the press is a tremendous instrument in the hands of the tyrant, and a most fearful supporter of his power. Through this channel he has exclusive access to the public mind ; and pours into it those systematic falsehoods, which fill every public communication, from the throne to the humblest officer of the empire ; those adulatory effusions, bordering on idolatry, which tend to enervate and corrupt the best feelings ; and those detestable lessons of despotism which help to rivet upon the minds as well as bodies of

* The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
 Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel.
 To men remote from power, but rarely known,
 Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own.

When these lines were written, the imagination of the poet had never conceived of that refined and diffusive despotism which has since been established in France. The present organization of religion, of the press, of the internal police, and of the conscription, would furnish images to poetry more terrific than the history of ancient tyranny has yielded.

men the most debasing servitude. The press, under its present organization in France, instead of being the friend, is the enemy of liberty and truth, the scourge of virtue, and will be the curse of posterity. Already the productions of artists and learned men in France are tainted with the influence of despotism. The mind is in bondage, and patronage, however liberal, cannot make it free. The learned bodies are all governed by the tyrant, and all their labours are directed to the perpetuity of his dominion. Eulogies, complimentary poems, elementary works for schools, and political catechisms may thrive, but nothing higher or nobler can be expected. The great men who survived the revolution have fallen into the different classes of the national institute, and submitted their faculties to the drill of a master. The eloquent Maury, the intrepid defender of the altar and throne in the early stages of the revolution, has returned from exile, to compose panegyrics upon the illustrious family of the Bonapartes ;* and David, the ferocious jacobin under Robespierre, now embodies the visions of his imagination to grace

* See Mr. Walsh's Letters on France and England, published in his Review, &c. I cannot forbear to express my admiration of this gentleman's talents, and of the noble purposes to which he devotes them. Perhaps no public writer ever made so strong an impression on the public mind. His first publication, the "Letter on the genius and disposition of the French government," was read with deep interest. It is a beautiful specimen of correct reasoning, in a style of pure and manly eloquence ; but above all, there is in it a tone of earnestness, and exactness in the statements of many new and important facts ; a spirit of benevolent anxiety for the welfare of his country, and a thorough comprehension of its interests and dangers, which excite as much interest as admiration. The subsequent numbers of his Review have rather confirmed, than weakened, the high opinion which his first work gave rise to. They display all the attributes of a fine scholar ; all the qualifications of a profound statesman ; and all the disinterested ardour of a patriot ; such as Washington, and Hamilton, and Ames, could approve and admire.

the habitation of his imperial master. Codes civil and criminal have been compiled, which afford no protection to innocence or private right ; and great efforts have been made to throw the splendors of learning, arts, and jurisprudence, around the throne ; but it does not require the gift of prophecy to foretell, that whatever is unconnected with the business of war, or does not in some way minister to the pleasures of a corrupt court, will ultimately decline.*

* A work has lately been published in France, under the patronage of the government, entitled, "Sur la Souveraineté," by *M. I. Chas.* The editors of the Edinburgh Review, in their remarks upon it observe that it "contains a panegyric, a *professed panegyric on despotism* ;—a comparison of this simple form of government with all other forms, whether simple or mixed—and in particular with that mixed form, which is exemplified in Great Britain ; and a distinct deliberate *raisonné* preference over them all. If Bonaparte has hitherto played the hypocrite, it must be allowed that his agents now speak plain. He probably thinks the time is at last come, when boldness is better than imposture ; and it cannot, at any rate, be insinuated, that he is afraid to avow his purposes. If impudence were a term which could apply to persons in situations so exalted, we should say that *this*, taken with all its circumstances, is the most impudent address which any government ever ventured upon offering to its subjects. How low must a nation, which had once dared to lift its eyes to liberty, be degraded, before its government could venture to present it with a creed like this ! How prodigiously did the first efforts of the French to acquire for themselves a good government, lead the world in general to overrate the true character of that nation ! With the single exception of courage and military skill, the commonest and cheapest qualities of human nature, they have exhibited nothing but what is vulgar in point of conception, and servile in point of spirit, through the whole course of their revolution. Hardly had it begun, when some hired ruffians in the metropolis were allowed to give law to the whole nation. How tamely after this did they bend their necks to the stroke of an exterminating tyrant, supported by a party already miserable both in numbers and in reputation.—Robespierre and the Jacobins ! With what base submissiveness did they again deliver themselves up to the misgovernment of a factious and arbitrary Directory ! How lightly did they permit themselves to be transferred into the bonds of the consulate ; and with what quiet obedience have they submitted to every encroachment of Bonaparte—till despotic power is at last not only consummated,

This blasting influence is coextensive with the power of the tyrant. All the countries of Europe, once the abode of tranquillity and comfort, over which he now exercises control, have felt it. Credit, commerce, industry, the social virtues that adorn life, and the fortitude that sustains its burthens ; all that wisdom has devised to secure the order of society, all that beneficence has executed to mitigate calamity, even the face of nature itself—all wither and die beneath his baleful influence. The charms of refined taste, the lustre of cultured life, the hopes that yield present bliss, and the dreams of future good, all fade at his approach ; desolation, gloom, amazement, sorrow, and despair, follow in his train.

It is not for me to interpret "dark sentences," or apply the sure word of prophecy to the existing state of France, or the passing events of the times. Without resorting to considerations of such awful import, there is something in the thought of an alliance with France,

but openly proclaimed, and held up to the nation, as an object upon which to plume themselves, and to despise their neighbours."

To give some idea of the nature of this work by *Cbas*, to those who do not read the Edinburgh Review, the following summary of the French constitution is extracted.

"Telle est l'institution et la nature du gouvernement Français. L'Empereur exerce seul la plénitude de la souveraineté, comme le représentant héréditaire de la nation, comme pouvoir constituant ; comme pouvoir administratif ; il est législateur et exécuter suprême des lois ; il est l'âme du gouvernement ; il met en activité tous les parties de la constitution ; c'est lui qui propose les lois constitutives, les lois civiles et administratives : il fait de réglemens ; crée des institutions sociales ; commande les armées ; déclare la guerre ; fait la paix ; conclut les traités de commerce ; et d'alliance ; nomme à tous les emplois civils, militaires et religieux : c'est en son nom que les lois sont proclamées, et que la justice est rendue dans tous les tribunaux. Personne est sacrée et inviolable ; son effigie est gravée sur les monnoies, il a le droit de faire grâce, et de commuer les peines. Les membres du corps législatif sont ses sujets ; tous les citoyens lui doivent respect et obéissance. Il n'a au-dessus de lui que Dieu et la loi. Tous ces droits, tous ces prerogatives constituent la véritable souveraineté ; il l'exerce dans toute sa plénitude, et dans toute son intégrité, sans postage, et sans division."

repulsive to a moral mind. No man who considers the present military power of France, the means it employs, and the objects it pursues, if he believe in the moral government of the Being, who

“Wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds,”

can contemplate such an event without (I quote the sentiment with awe) “a certain fearful looking for of judgment.” It seems to be bidding a final adieu to all that makes life a blessing; and soliciting the vengeance of heaven upon ourselves and our children. It is taking up our residence in Sodom, soon to be visited in anger, instead of flying from its destruction. There is not less infatuation than peril in such a connection; and when it shall have accomplished its tendencies, it will stand among the recorded wonders of history, as much the monument of our infamy, as the “grave stone of our liberties.”

We appear, as a people, to be under the same malignant spell which bound the nations of Europe to their own sad fate. There is an apathy in the public feeling on the subject of a war with Great Britain, a reluctance to admit the necessary consequences of such a war; a disposition to hope all things against all hope, as almost to justify the belief that we are already too spiritless to make one effort to save ourselves from threatened bondage, or too corrupt to desire it. The ruin that has awaited all those countries, which have been corrupted, and at last brought under the power of France, is apparently known only to be disregarded. Experience, though still inculcating her lessons with whips of scorpions, is no longer regarded as an instructor. All sensibility to our dangers seems to be dead, reason has lost its power, and truth its authority. We resign ourselves in listless indolence to the manage-

ment of an administration,* whose power has no foundation in the real interests or virtues of the country.

I might here repeat the question, which no one can answer;—what is to be gained by even a successful war against Great Britain? If there is any truth in the preceding remarks, she is neither able nor disposed to engage in a war for any thing short of her essential rights. If it is admitted that we can compel her to yield these, by the aid of her enemy, we make our own ruin sure. Does this brighten our future prospects? There are few intelligent men at the present day of any party, who do not admit, that the fall of British independence would destroy all hope of maintaining our own.† My heart is full of this subject, but I must

* “*Quicquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi.*” This sentiment of the poet is as truly descriptive of an elective government as of any other. A president may inflict as severe sufferings upon a people as a monarch. The only difference seems to be in the mode.

† “If Britain falls in fighting our battles, we must fight our own; and what law of sound policy or true wisdom is there, that should choose to fight them unassisted and alone? *We do not say that the time has come—* heaven forbid it should; but it may come, and that speedily, when the opposition to a British alliance would be treason against American independence. Let French emissaries cavil, but let Americans ponder.” Such was the sentiment of AMES in the year 1806. What would have been his sentiments if he had lived to witness the present state of the country, on the eve of a war with Great Britain, and of an alliance with her enemy. But he has been taken from the evil which was to come; and surely a purer spirit never fled from earth to heaven; nor has a brighter intelligence ever beamed upon this nether world. Yet this man, so pure and disinterested that he seemed to have been sanctified and set apart to the service of his country, has not been suffered to rest in peace. His political character, and even his motives, have been assailed with great bitterness by the Hon. John Q. Adams, under the pretence of a review.

And was not this a becoming labour, let me ask, for Mr. Adams? for a man whose sordid mind is utterly incapable of even comprehending the character of Ames? and whose political principles have no other foundation than his private interest; a man to be purchased in the market, like any other commodity, and whose malignant passions fit him for the service of an administration, deriving its support from the passions and the vices of the country. If in the times of trouble which await us, the passions of this man shall make him conspicuous enough, to induce the historian to transmit the history of his life, his meanness and his malignity will

desist. This then is the rallying point of patriotism ; I use this word in its original sense ;* the sentiment that ought to govern every pen, and animate every heart—save the country from a British war, or all is lost.†

want no other illustration than his attack upon the memory of Ames. The jackall has preyed upon the dead lion. Let it be so.

I know that this is harsh language to apply to any man claiming the rank and feelings of a gentleman ; but the occasion justifies it ; and may “ my right hand forget its cunning,” if it ever refuses to vindicate the character of FISHER AMES.

“ I am worse than a lingerer in my faith,” as to the political integrity or talents of Mr. Adams. His employment, by the present administration, under all circumstances, is good proof of the one ; and his “ Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory,” a book of common learning, written in a depraved taste, of the other.

* Few men in any country ever had higher or juster claims to the dignified character of a patriot, than Col. Pickering. The numbers now publishing with his name, addressed to the people of the United States, are full of instruction. They are written with great perspicuity, adapted to the times, and are calculated to be extensively useful. Independent of the many important facts already disclosed, which were known to very few ; of the reasonings and admonitions, the result of wisdom and experience, which these addresses contain ; they have an authority which few political writings possess :—the authority of experience, of long and faithful service, and of an unspotted life. The answer he gives to the slanders of his enemies, is a challenge to *examine his private as well as his public life*. What man among his accusers, *dares to make such an offer*.

† Perhaps there has never been a period in the affairs of the country, which had such strong claims upon the exertions of its friends as the present. Much is done by men whose business it is to enlighten public opinion, I mean the Editors of federal newspapers. Many of these papers, such as the New York Evening Post, the Federal Republican, the Gazette of the United States, the Connecticut Mirror, The Repertory, Centinel, and many others, are conducted with great intelligence and ability. I know the editors are poorly rewarded. The same talents and industry which are bestowed upon many of these journals, would accumulate a fortune, if employed in other pursuits. But there is a sort of reward withheld from some of them, which is very proper to give, because, in truth, the donor receives full value for the same ; and it is very pleasant to receive, because it confers no obligation—I mean the business of advertising. The federal merchants who neglect to advertise in political papers, because some other paper of no political character, or a bad one, has more advertisements in its columns, have very limited notions of their own interests. They are little aware, how much the value of the merchandise, they advertise *exclusively*, in some neutral or stupid vehicle, depends on the labours of men, who are permitted to pursue their toil unrewarded by this cheapest and best mode of patronage.

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